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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 001608

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF AND AF/E  
LONDON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA WATCHER  
CJTF-HOA AND USCENTCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/24/2017

TAGS: PREL PGOV KDEM KPKO SO ET

SUBJECT: SOMALIA: SPEAKER OF TRANSITIONAL FEDERAL  
PARLIAMENT DEFENDS ETHIOPIAN INTERVENTION

Classified By: ERIC WONG, DEPUTY POL-ECON COUNSELOR. REASON: 1.4 (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Sheikh Adan Mohammed Nur, Speaker of Somalia's Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP), led a 18-member parliamentary delegation to Addis Ababa this week to meet with Ethiopian MPs and GOE principals, including PM Meles and FM Seyoum. In a May 24 meeting with Ambassador, Nur said he aimed to express the Somali people's gratitude for Ethiopia having come to Somalia's defense, as well as to discuss future bilateral cooperation against common threats. Outlining the threat Somalia had faced from the "jihadist" Council of Islamic Courts, Nur underscored that the TFP had approved a resolution appealing to the international community for foreign assistance, but that only Ethiopia had responded immediately. Nur appealed for USG assistance to facilitate the deployment of additional African Union peacekeepers to Somalia, while also pushing Ethiopian forces to remain in order to avoid a security "vacuum." In a frank discussion of the weaknesses of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG), Nur said he had complained to both TFG President Yusuf and Prime Minister Ghedi of the need for improved power-sharing in the military, as well as in ministerial and diplomatic assignments. Nur also noted that while the TFP had explicitly endorsed the upcoming National Reconciliation Conference, President Yusuf had announced the formation of the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee (NGRC), chaired by Ali Mahdi Mohamed, without prior consultation with Parliament. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) On May 24, the Speaker of Somalia's TFP Sheikh Adan Mohammed Nur met with Ambassador, PAO, and deputy pol-econ counselor. Political and Reconciliation Advisor to the Speaker Mohammed Rashid Haji (a former resident of Minnesota), Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) Ambassador to Ethiopia and PermRep to the African Union Ambassador Abdulkarim Farah, and a note-taker accompanied the Speaker. Amb. Farah translated Speaker Nur's remarks, which were in Somali.

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CIC THREAT PROMPTED REQUEST FOR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE  
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¶3. (C) Nur noted that whereas he had represented only his own political party when he had last met with the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia years ago, he now represented all of Somalia. He was visiting Ethiopia with 18 Somali parliamentarians at the

invitation of the Speaker of Ethiopia's Parliament, Teshome Toga, whom he had invited to pay a reciprocal trip to Somalia. Nur said his trip aimed to express the Somali people's gratitude for Ethiopia having come to Somalia's defense, as well as to discuss future bilateral cooperation against common threats. The majority of Somalis sought peace and security, and a stable government. Citing the TFP's recent approval of a counterterrorism bill, Nur said he sought to convey to the Ethiopian people that Somalis did not want terrorists infiltrating Ethiopia from Somalia. Nur said he had met with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin, and Speaker Teshome; he would meet with AU Commission Chairperson Konare after returning from a May 25 visit to Khartoum.

¶4. (C) Nur underscored that Ethiopian intervention on behalf of the TFG had provided "life support" to Somalia, and had been approved by Somalia's parliament. He dismissed the contention that Ethiopia had "invaded" Somalia and would never withdraw as "propaganda." The TFP's approval of a request for foreign military assistance to counter the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) had come only after CIC extremists had rejected negotiations in Khartoum and elsewhere between the CIC and the TFG, and after CIC forces had come within 20-30 kilometers of Lower Juba and surrounded Baidoa, he said. CIC decisions were made by foreigners, not by Somalis, Nur added, noting that the CIC had replaced the Somali flag with a "jihadist" flag (a black flag portraying a swan) in areas it had occupied. CIC extremists had sought to brainwash Somali youth and terrorize moderates. In response to this threat, the TFG had made an urgent request to the international community, but only Ethiopia had responded immediately. As Ethiopia lacked the capacity to continue

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this assistance alone, it was imperative that other countries provide support; however, only Uganda had contributed troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

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ETHIOPIANS MUST REMAIN UNTIL MORE AU TROOPS DEPLOYED  
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¶5. (C) USG assistance was needed, Nur said, to (1) push the African Union to deploy additional troops to Somalia, while also (2) pushing Ethiopian troops to remain in Somalia, so as to avoid a security "vacuum." Nur welcomed the opportunity to meet with USG officials, saying that the U.S. understood the situation in Somalia better than others in the international community. He hailed the recent appointment of a U.S. Special Envoy for Somalia.

¶6. (C) Nur expressed concern that EU support for the TFP was "deteriorating" and may have to be replaced by USG support: what the Europeans had started, "maybe other countries can finish." The TFG recognized problems in administration as a weakness, but needed financial support from the EU or the U.S. Ambassador responded that the international community would be looking for progress by the TFG in advance of the upcoming National Reconciliation Conference (NRC). The TFG needed to show success, as some parties actively sought the TFG's failure.

¶7. (C) Ambassador underscored the need not only for the TFG to engage potential AU troop-contributing countries (Farah responded that these included Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, and Nigeria), but also for President Abdullahi Yusuf to show the international community that he was reaching out to all clans in Somalia (including the Habr-Gedir/Ayr, Habr-Gedir/Suleiman, Abgal, and other Hawiye sub-clans). While Mogadishu's airport and seaport were currently controlled by individual clans, Somalis had to form a cohesive government that represented all clans, not a single one. In Kismayo, intra-clan conflict among Darods needed to end. The U.S. was committed to supporting Somalia's infrastructure and capacity-building, but in

partnership with Somalia; the future of the TFG had to be decided by the people of Somalia, Ambassador said. Ambassador also recognized Amb. Farah for his advocacy on behalf of the TFG; Nur said the GOE had also expressed appreciation for Farah's efforts.

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SPEAKER ACKNOWLEDGES PROBLEMS IN POWER-SHARING  
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¶ 8. (C) Nur said he agreed with the Ambassador on all points and the issue of power-sharing. Nur acknowledged that in a meeting the previous day with Ethiopian FM Seyoum, he had expressed concern that the TFG was not delivering. At times, President Yusuf was "not functioning as he should be;" if Parliament had made errors, it would seek to rectify them. Nur said that in response to a letter he had written to them, President Yusuf and Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Ghedi had pledged to rectify problems with power-sharing in the military, among permanent secretaries of TFG ministries, and among ambassadorial appointments. Nur said he had also told Yusuf and Ghedi that "one tribe" should not dominate others. Nur defended the recent appointment of former warlord Mohamed Dhere (Hawiye/Abgal) as mayor of Mogadishu, asserting that he had lobbied for Dhere despite Yusuf's initial objection.

¶ 9. (C) Intra-clan conflict in Kismayo involved Darod/Merehan fighting Darod/Mijerteen; as the Darod were not native to Kismayo, Kismayo should be handed over to another clan's control, Nur said.

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PARLIAMENT ENDORSES RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE  
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¶ 10. (C) Questioned about efforts to reach out to Somali clans, Nur complained that President Yusuf had announced the independence of the NRC, stated that the TFG would follow the NRC's decisions, and announced the formation of the National

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Governance and Reconciliation Committee (NGRC) chaired by Ali Mahdi Mohamed, without prior consultation with Parliament. Nur explained that as the former Transitional National Government (TNG) had collapsed once the Mbagathi process (which led ultimately to the TFG's formation) had been announced, some now feared that the NRC could undermine the TFG. Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRSG) for Somalia, Francois Fall, had asked Parliament whether it endorsed the NGRC, stating that Yusuf's word alone was insufficient to legitimize the committee. Nur said the NGRC's legitimacy remained an issue that had to be addressed.

¶ 11. (U) In response, Nur said, the Transitional Federal Parliament had adopted a resolution:  
-- Stressing support for the NRC;  
-- Urging that delegates to the conference should be selected by traditional leaders in accordance with the "4.5" formula (i.e., Darod, Dir, Hawiye, and Rahanweyne clans, with the remainder held by minority constituencies);  
-- Noting that the NRC should operate under the TFG charter; and  
-- Affirming that Parliament should be the final arbiter of disputes over representation, in cases where several clans lived together in the same area.

¶ 12. (C) The TFP has decided earlier that, prior to the NRC, all MPs should return to their home areas in order to address constituencies at the regional, district, and town level; and that elections should be held in areas that lacked representatives. However, lack of funds had prevented this. Nur said he had given proposals for funding to both Ambassador Ranneberger in Nairobi and to the EU.

¶ 13. (C) COMMENT. Speaker Nur's observation that the

Transitional Federal Parliament has explicitly endorsed the National Reconciliation Conference, while it has not similarly endorsed President Yusuf's appointment of Ali Mahdi Mohamed and other members of the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee, highlights a potential pitfall of the NRC process, if potential delegates dissent with Ali Mahdi's role. It also shows that despite speculation that Ali Mahdi may be appointed as TFG Prime Minister (vice the unpopular Ghedi), Parliament is not guaranteed to endorse him. END COMMENT.

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